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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

36TH YEAR

MAY 15, 1978

FOOD PRICES

--- IN THE SECOND HALF

Food prices are not expected to increase appreciably during the second half of 1978, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture economists. Seasonally large supplies of fresh produce and some meats will partially offset the anticipated increases in marketing costs.

However, four important factors will influence the rest of the prices for the second half of the year: (1) weather impacts here and abroad (2) production decisions by livestock and poultry producers (indications now are for larger supplies of beef and broilers) (3) developments on the general economic front--economic growth is expected to continue but at a somewhat slower pace, which implies a moderate rise in food demand (4) further actions in the farm policy area--even if farm prices are raised, the major impact on retail food prices would not be felt until later this year.

The May supply situation looks like this...

Red meats: Beef--plentiful, although supplies are declining.
Pork--adequate, supplies declining seasonally.

Poultry and eggs: Broiler-fryers--plentiful, above records of a year ago.
Turkeys--adequate.
Eggs--plentiful, output two percent above a year ago.

Milk and dairy products: plentiful, production of butter, cheese, and nonfat dry milk will exceed demand.

Fruits, vegetables and nuts:

Fresh oranges, grapefruit, and apples: adequate

Major processed fruits: canned applesauce, fruit cocktail, cling peaches, pears, and frozen strawberries, adequate.

Grapefruit products: frozen, canned, and chilled, plentiful.

Orange concentrate and other orange products: light supplies.

New crop fresh spring fruits: apricots, sweet cherries and peaches, light.

Fresh strawberries, plentiful, barring adverse weather conditions.

Dried prunes, adequate. Raisins, plentiful.

Processed vegetables, adequate for most items.

Fresh potatoes, peanuts, wheat and corn, plentiful.

ENERGY -- AND HOME DESIGN

Homes financed after 1980 by the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture may get a significant portion of their energy from an alternative fuel source (such as solar energy), according to proposals by USDA's assistant secretary for rural development, Alex Mercure.

New home designs could include solar units, wood heating systems, geothermal units and other non-fossil fuels. FmHA already has new thermal efficiency standards ready to be implemented. A home weatherization program is underway and energy-efficient construction materials (such as adobe) have been approved for use for the first time. Now solar units can be financed through regular FmHA programs. USDA initiatives are aimed at energy conservation and reduction of energy costs for home-owners.

FmHA's housing program serves all rural areas including towns of up to 10,000 population, and towns of 10,000 to 20,000 outside standard metropolitan statistical areas, where there is a shortage of mortgage credit for low- and moderate-income families.

ABOUT Karen E. Winner, formerly
west coast editor for Wo-
YOU men's Wear Daily, has been
named assistant managing
'n' editor for the San Diego
(Cal.) Union.....Arlene
ME Joyce, seafood expert at
the Marine Fisheries in
Baltimore, Md., has written a cookbook
on squid, which is available free in
limited supply for food editors. Write
her at 40 S. Gay St., Baltimore, Md.
21202--Room 419....Audrey Fecht, Amer-
ican Broadcasting Company News press
representative becomes the new Region
7 director for the National Federation
of Press Women in June.

ON EATING VEGETABLES

Since 1972, Americans have registered a steady but slow gain in the use of fresh vegetables.

Changing eating habits emphasizing fewer calories, plus health consciousness appear to be the main reasons for the shift towards fresh vegetables. Salad bars in restaurants---once a novelty---are now commonplace. Many popular "two-way" (good cooked or raw) vegetables are eaten raw. Consumption of high-calorie vegetables has slipped in favor of low-calorie vegetables like cauliflower, broccoli and snap beans.

In 1976, per-capita consumption of fresh vegetables reached 100 pounds--from a 1972 low of 96 pounds--compared to 102 pounds of canned and 20 pounds of frozen vegetables. (The figures do not include potatoes.)

FOOD CLIPS

Remember -- no one food provides all the nutrients in the amounts we need for good nutrition and good health. A variety of different kinds of foods--meats, meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, breads, cereals, fats, milk--are necessary, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists.

* * *

Liver is a fine-textured meat with a distinctive flavor. Whole liver should have a moist, smooth surface when purchased; sliced liver may appear slightly porous.

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Cured hams and sausages are free of trichinae by the combined effects of time, temperature, salt, and drying.